AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-14 (canceled)

Claim 15. (Currently amended) A process for providing a uniform web of thermoplastic filament, comprising the sequential steps of:

(a) transporting spun filaments through a plurality of filament transport tubes ~~means~~ into a confined zone of reduced turbulence; and

(b) transporting the filaments through said confined zone with minimal machine direction deflection from said plurality of transport tubes ~~means~~, said filaments thereby being spread and separated in said confined zone by forming a thin layer of the filaments along the length of the confined zone, said confined zone defined by a pair of opposing sideplates and a pair of opposing endplates attached to the ends of said sideplates, said sideplates substantially parallel to one another, said endplates substantially parallel to one another, said sideplates and said endplates substantially parallel to said plurality of transport tubes.

Claim 16. (Currently amended) A process for providing a uniform web of thermoplastic filaments as in claim 15, wherein said confined zone comprises a filament delivery slot ~~defined by a pair of opposing sideplates and a pair of opposing endplates attached to the ends of said sideplates~~.

Claim 17. (Cancelled)

Claim 18. (Cancelled)

Claim 19. (Original) A process as in claim 15, further comprising the step of transporting the filaments through a tapered transition member between said transport means and said confined zone.

Claim 20. (Original) A process as in claim 15, further comprising the step of applying an electrostatic charge to the filaments within said confined zone to further separate the filament.

Claim 21. (Original) A process as in claim 15, wherein said filaments are transported via pneumatic means.

Claim 22. (Original) A process as in claim 15, further comprising the step of depositing said filament layer on a moving support below said confined zone.

Claim 23. (Original) A process as in claim 22, further comprising the step of bonding said deposited filament layer.

Claim 24. (Original) A process for providing a uniform web of thermoplastic filaments, comprising the sequential steps of

a) pneumatically transporting spun filaments through a plurality of filament transport tubes into a tapered transition member, said transport tubes having a diameter;

b) transporting said filaments through said tapered transition member into a delivery slot, said delivery slot defined by a pair of opposing sideplates and a pair of opposing endplates attached to the ends of said sideplates, said sideplates substantially parallel to one another, said endplates substantially parallel to one another, said sideplates and said endplates substantially parallel to said transport

tubes, said delivery slot having a width defined by the distance between said sideplates, said width narrower than said tube diameter;

c) transporting the filaments through said delivery slot with minimal machine direction deflection from said transport tubes and transition member, said filaments spread and separated in a cross direction in said delivery channel by forming a layer of the filaments along the length of the elongated delivery slot; and

d) electrostatically charging the filaments within said delivery channel for further separation and spreading.